

*File: Yucca Mtn (ge.)*

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A hearing will be held by the House Commerce Subcommittee at 9:30 AM Apr 18 on Yucca Mountain. It may be webcast at:

<http://energycommerce.house.gov/107/hearings/04182002Hearing505/hearing.htm>

NARUC provided the following analysis of how the votes seem to be lining up:

As Barton Sees House Vote On Yucca By End Of Month....

The House could vote within the next two weeks on a resolution to override Nevada Gov. Kenny Guinn's veto to store nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain, House Energy and Commerce Energy and Air Quality Subcommittee Chairman Joe Barton, R-Texas, said today. At a news conference, Barton said House Speaker Hastert would like the resolution voted on by the end of April. Barton said his panel will hold a hearing Thursday, and then the subcommittee will take up an override resolution next Tuesday afternoon. Barton expects the full committee and the House to act soon after, and predicted "300- plus votes" for the override resolution. Barton argued that, after 20 years of "confirming scientific research and billions of dollars spent, it is time for the federal government to fulfill its obligation to safely store the nations used nuclear fuel."

Barton also today said the strategy is for the House to act first to build momentum for Yucca in the Senate. President Bush decided to make Yucca Mountain the permanent nuclear storage facility earlier this year, and Guinn, a Republican, then vetoed the proposal last Monday. Congress now has 90 days to override the veto on a straight up-or-down vote. Barton's spokeswoman said Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chairman Bingaman will bring up an override resolution there before the Memorial Day recess. Any senator can call up the legislation, but Senate Democratic leaders are working to ensure that no Democrat would do so. Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., said last week the issue would be referred to committee for 60 days before anything would happen on the floor. Barton today predicted "significantly more than 50 votes" in the Senate for an override. According to an ongoing CongressDaily survey, 40 senators say they plan to vote to override Guinn's decision, while only 14 have said they will vote to uphold it. Another 24 remain undecided, and the balance of senators have not responded to the survey.

A group of Yucca Mountain opponents held a rally yesterday on the Capitol steps to generate opposition to the administration's plan. Speaking to several hundred supporters, Senate Majority Whip Reid, Nevada's senior senator, charged that Yucca's backers are spreading a number of "lies" in order to advance the plan. First, he said, the administration claims the Yucca site would create a single repository for nuclear waste, but the nation's 100 nuclear plants would continue to generate and store new waste. Reid also criticized the White House for alleging that transporting waste across the country to Nevada would be safe. "It's not a question of whether there will be an accident. It's a question of how many accidents," Reid said. Meanwhile, environmental groups launched an advertising campaign in Vermont, urging

Environment and Public Works Chairman Jeffords and Judiciary Chairman Leahy to oppose the site. - by  
Greta Wodele and Brody Mullins

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